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ABSTRACT

In order for schools and community agencies to develop the capacity to support persons with severe patterns of problem behaviors in typical community settings, they need to be knowledgeable about recent behavioral advances and have processes in place for implementation of these advances. This need creates a new challenge for inservice training of direct support staff. One innovative approach to capacity building is through inservice training that "embeds" training on positive behavioral support in a longitudinal system of continuous quality improvement. In the Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support program, training is delivered on-site, to all personnel, in distributed sessions across months; uses competency-based training and competency testing; relies on inductive as well as deductive instruction; uses multiple training methods, including learner-guided materials; emphasizes efficient delivery of training; creates the capacity for others in a setting to train new personnel; and tailors training to the unique culture, policies, and vision of the community program or setting. (Contains 24 references.) (JDD)

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EMBEDDED INSERVICE TRAINING IN POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

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at the American Association on Mental Retardation
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The most pronounced change in special education in recent years has been the drive toward full inclusion for all people with disabilities. The advantages of full inclusion, and the risks associated with segregation, have led to a growing need for a technology of support that will allow all people with disabilities to live, work, go to school, and play in typical, integrated community settings. No where is this need more evident, and the challenges greater, than in the area of behavioral support for persons with severe patterns of problem behaviors. Significant advances have occurred in our approaches to behavioral support in recent years, but currently these advances are not consistently being incorporated into our schools and community support programs. If schools and community agencies are to develop the capacity to support persons with problem behaviors in typical community settings, they need to be knowledgeable about recent behavioral advances and have processes in place for implementation of these advances. This need creates a new challenge for inservice training of direct support staff.

This presentation describes an innovative approach to capacity building through inservice training that "embeds" training on positive behavioral support in a longitudinal system of continuous quality improvement. Continuous quality improvement processes, adapted from industry and now being applied to human service systems, represent a major advancement in efforts to ensure quality services and support for people with disabilities (J. Albin, 1992; Deming, 1982; Gilbert, 1978; Rhodes, Mank, Sandow, Buckley, & Albin, 1990). Continuous quality improvement efforts build from the concept that social service support systems (e.g., a school, a supported employment program, a residential program) should focus on continually getting better, rather than on meeting minimal standards for compliance,

accreditation, or certification (Sandow, Rhodes, Mank, Ramsing, & Lynch, 1990). Staff training represents a key element in quality improvement processes (J. Albin, 1992; Gilbert, 1978). Opportunities for training should be continually available. The content of training should focus directly on those specific skills and competencies needed by personnel to do their jobs successfully. To be effective, training also must be an integral part of the local system, locally controlled and tailored to meet local needs. Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support is designed with these requirements in mind. It represents a new way of approaching inservice training.

Traditional approaches to inservice training typically involve pulling trainees out of their working contexts, providing them with a short, intense presentation of ideas, materials, and/or skills, and then expecting them to generalize and apply the newly acquired knowledge or skills in their own settings. Although this approach has some positive features, it has not always proven functional for changing the day-to-day behavior of direct care and other support staff after training. Generalization of knowledge and skills learned in the training to actual work settings is a significant problem for traditional pull-out inservice training (Bernstein, 1982; Morch & Eikeseth, 1992; Smith, Parker, Taubman, & Lovaas, 1992; Ziarnik & Bernstein, 1982). Perhaps due to these generalization problems, traditional inservice training may have little or no impact on the people with disabilities in trainees' programs.

In recent years efforts have been made to improve the effectiveness of inservice training through a pyramid or "trainer-of-trainers" approach (Anderson, Albin, Mesaros, Dunlap, & Morelli-Robbins, in press; Demchak & Browder, 1990). This approach focuses on a two-tiered strategy. The first tier is to provide training to a select group of individuals.

These trained individuals are then expected to redeliver the training to others in their local environments (programs, communities or states). Trainer-of-trainers efforts have been shown to be effective (Demchak & Browder, 1990), and have the advantage of leaving in place individuals capable of training others in the future (Anderson et al., in press). Embedded Inservice Training uses the trainer-of-trainers approach, but goes a step further in an effort to individualize the training that is delivered in any one setting. Embedded Inservice Training seeks to make training an ongoing, indigenous part of the environment rather than a special, "extra" event.

Features of Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support

The basic features of Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support are diagrammed in Figure 1. These features provide an approach to inservice training that reflects the role of training in continuous quality improvement, and that meets the needs raised by the comprehensive content and specific skills that make up our existing technology for positive behavioral support. These features also are designed to meet the unique needs presented by different schools, community programs, and local systems. Finally, they are consistent with current research on effective inservice training procedures. A brief discussion and rationale for each feature is presented below.

Training is delivered on-site. Delivering training on-site has several advantages. It allows the training to be tailored to the specific persons with disabilities, problems, settings, staff, and situations for which training effects are targeted. Training examples and experiences can be drawn directly from the trainees' work situation. As a result, concerns about generalization of training effects to real work settings are minimized. Working on-site,

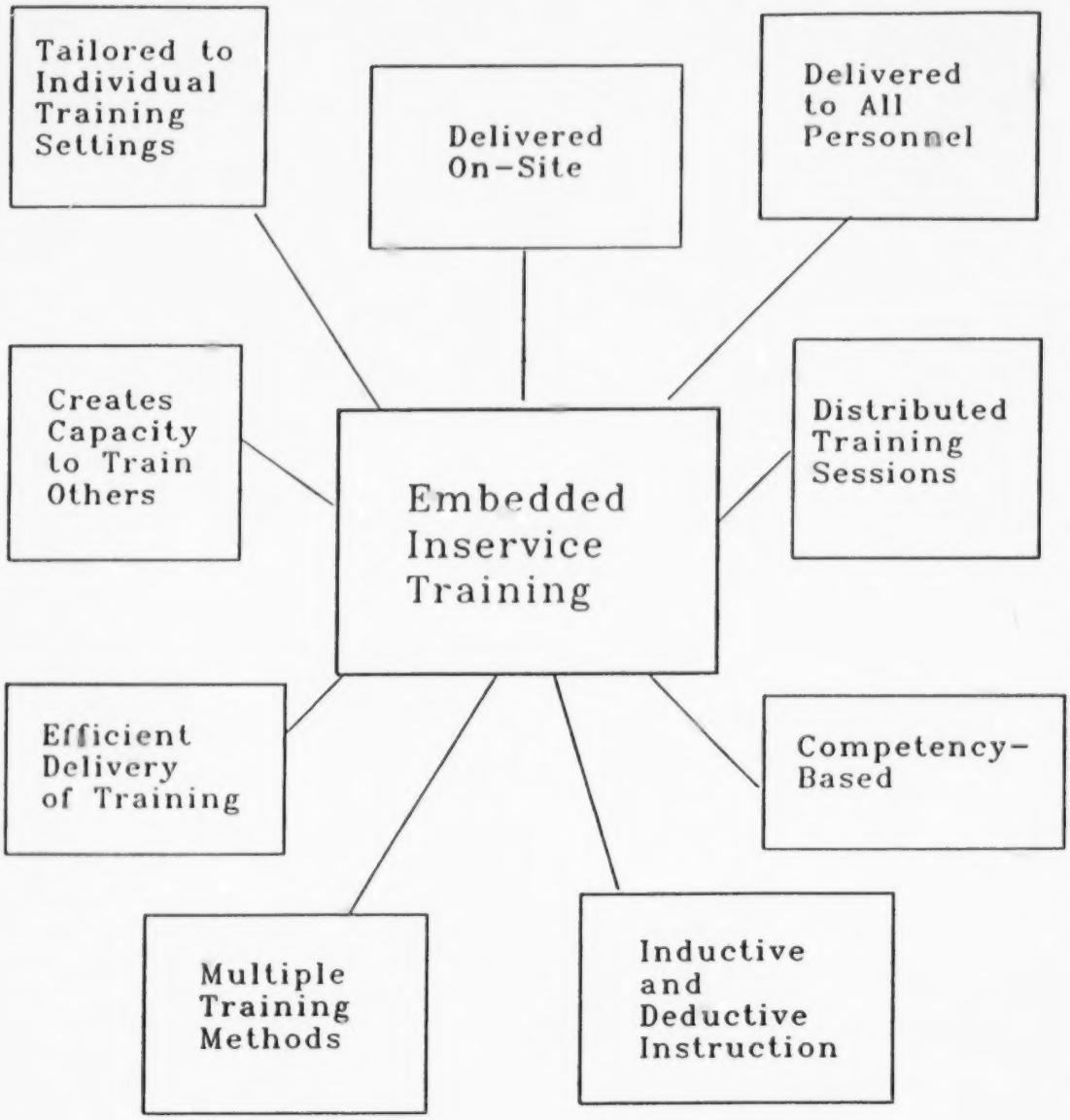

Figure 1. Embedded Inservice Training features.

the training can be delivered in a manner that fits the logistical and scheduling constraints of a particular setting, and that meets any specific needs unique to the setting, the people being trained, or the training needs being addressed. Potential disruption of on-going activities can be minimized, and necessary accommodations can be made more easily. Research has documented that on-site training is effective in producing both changes in trainee behaviors and positive effects for the persons with disabilities supported in the training sites (Demchak & Browder, 1990; Schinke & Wong, 1977).

Training is delivered to multiple personnel in the site. Positive behavioral support involves a team process. Teachers and direct support personnel, managers and supervisors, related services personnel, and others (including administrators, family members, and friends) work together to provide effective, appropriate support. Training that includes only one or two people, or that includes people from only one or two roles, places a very heavy burden on a small number of people. This seriously jeopardizes the success of the total support process. Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support attempts to bring together for training multiple stakeholders, who play a variety of roles within the support process. By training multiple personnel, general content and skills relevant to everyone in the process can be efficiently trained; while, at the same time, content and methods can be tailored to the specific roles, needs, and skills of individual participants in the collaborative process. Capacity and expertise are enhanced at multiple personnel levels within the support system, and responsibility for the success of the support process is spread across all of the support process participants.

Training is delivered in distributed sessions across months. Training in positive behavioral support strategies requires covering a broad range of content topics and skills. The best way to deliver this comprehensive content is in pieces distributed across a period of time. With a distributed training approach, trainees have an opportunity to learn and apply the content and skills within a particular area or component (e.g., module) of the training before moving on to the next topic area and/or skill. Content can be sequenced and presented on a schedule that meets the needs of the trainees and program. Trainees do not have to find large blocks of time for training, time when regular job tasks that must be postponed or set aside build up and create added headaches. With distributed presentation of content, trainees are not overwhelmed with information and training at one point in time, and then left to determine how to implement and incorporate this large amount of content into their job performance.

A second reason for using distributed training sessions is that they allow training to be structured as an ongoing, long-term process. An important aspect of a total quality improvement approach is providing personnel with the opportunity to enhance their skills on a continual basis (J. Albin, 1992). Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support, with its distributed delivery of training modules, provides an opportunity for ongoing learning and development across time.

Competency-based training and competency testing. Defining the various roles of personnel involved in the behavioral support process and identifying the skills or competencies required for success in those roles are critical elements in effective personnel training (Buckley, Albin, & Mank, 1988; Fredericks & Templeman, 1990). Training materials

in Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support will target both core competencies, the basic training needs that are universal across service settings (Hewitt, 1992), and skill-building competencies, training that expands and enhances knowledge and skills in more advanced content areas. In addition, once skills or competencies necessary for success in a role have been identified, it is equally critical that testing occur as a part of training to ensure that trainees can perform these at an adequate level. Inservice training, like any good teaching, must require active responding on the part of the learner to be effective (Engelmann & Carnine, 1982; Markle, 1983).

Reliance on inductive as well as deductive instruction. Learning basic principles of behavior and generic support skills are useful aspects of personnel training, but good inservice training in behavioral support also must focus on specific individuals with problem behaviors and the contexts in which those problem behaviors occur. Too often, inservice training relies only on the presentation of basic principles and general concepts (e.g., the principles of reinforcement, the basic laws of learning). Trainees are expected to deduce what they should do from these basic principles. Deductive instructional procedures are useful, but they are not enough. Teachers, direct care and other personnel developing and implementing a behavioral support plan for an individual need to know what to do for their "target person(s)" and how to do it. Inservice training that occurs with a focus on meeting the needs of specific individuals provides opportunities for general principles to be identified and taught inductively. These principles are taught in the context of their use, and are seen in action.

Use multiple training methods, including learner-guided materials. A clear message for effective inservice training of adults is that multiple methods be used to present content

and teach skills (Anderson et al., in press; Fredericks & Templeman, 1990). The use of multiple training methods makes it likely that all trainees will experience a preferred method of instruction. It also provides for multiple opportunities for trainees to learn. They get to hear or read about a skill or procedure, watch it modeled in live action or on videotape, and practice it in actual or simulated contexts. Training methods utilized in Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support include written materials, videotaped presentations and demonstrations, simulated practice exercises and role-playing activities, modeling and coaching from local training coordinators or mentors, and supervised hands-on training experiences with feedback provided.

An important feature of the training methods is the use of learner-guided materials to provide training. Learner-guided materials offer flexibility and efficiency in inservice training. Individual trainees can move through material at their own pace. Training can be tailored for specific people or personnel roles, with individuals working on their own only through those materials that they need, in sequence that meets their needs. In addition, learner-guided materials are an effective approach to inservice training (Itkonen, 1989; Singer, Sowers, & Irvin, 1986).

Efficient delivery of training. An important goal for inservice training is that delivery of the training not require too much time taken away from other responsibilities. Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support, with its learner-guided materials and emphasis on creating training capacity (see the next feature), is designed for efficient implementation. Teachers, supervisors, program managers, or other designated "trainers" within a school or agency should not have to spend lots of time presenting material or

working with other staff being trained.

Create the capacity for others in a setting to train new personnel. Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support utilizes a trainer-of-trainers approach to produce individuals within schools, agencies, or local systems who can provide ongoing training and mentoring. This internal capacity to deliver training helps to ensure the maintenance of training effects, particularly as staff turnover occurs and new staff are hired. Importantly, this feature aims at reducing reliance on outsiders to meet staff training needs. The role of the local "trainers," "training coordinators," or "mentors" is to train others in the school or community program, guiding them through training materials, and serving as coaches or mentors in the training process.

Tailor training to the unique culture, policies, and vision of the community program or setting where training occurs. Community programs differ in a number of ways, and have unique training needs and requirements. An effective inservice training approach must be sufficiently flexible that it can be used across many different programs. The features of Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support ensure that this approach to inservice training can be tailored to meet the unique training needs of individual schools and community programs.

Significance of Embedded Inservice Training in Positive Behavioral Support

Currently, the implementation of positive behavioral support approaches in schools and community programs often relies heavily on both inservice staff training and/or technical assistance from consultants or "experts" from outside of the school or agency. Frequently, this is someone who may not even be part of the local service system in an area (Donnellan,

LaVigna, Zambito, & Thvedt, 1985; Durand & Kishi, 1987; Janney & Meyer, 1990; Malette et al., 1992). While outside inservice training and technical assistance consultants are, and will continue to be, valuable resources, there is a clear need to build the capacity of local service delivery systems to meet the unique needs of persons with serious behavioral challenges (Anderson et al., in press; Fredericks & Templeman, 1990; Snell, 1990). Widespread adoption and implementation of positive approaches requires effective training systems that (a) can present the comprehensive analysis, intervention, and support processes that characterize positive behavioral support approaches, and (b) embed effective, ongoing staff training as an indigenous part of each support agency.

The Embedded Inservice Training approach attempts to meet these needs and, as such, represents an innovative and potentially significant contribution to the field. The embedded approach to inservice training can be adapted to any content area. It provides a vehicle for continuous quality improvement in schools, community programs, and other service delivery settings by offering a training system that (a) is locally controlled; (b) is responsive to local needs, systems, and philosophies; (c) is efficient and to a large extent learner-guided; (d) provides training on-site, distributed across time, using multiple teaching methods; and (e) creates the internal capacity to maintain and extend training. Widespread utilization of this training approach would represent a significant systems change that could facilitate efforts for inclusion of all people with disabilities, including those with challenging problem behaviors, in our schools and communities.

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